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BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS: A SOCIAL NETWORK ADVERTISING ANALYSIS AND APPROACH

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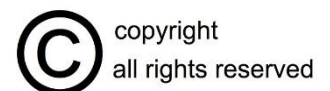
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ABSTRACT

A business communicator is expected to be equipped with the knowledge for practical use/implementation of communication techniques. The nature of global communication requires that individuals communicate across multiple channels for various purposes. In reality, social media networks that have developed along with communication technology have become a useful trend in the dissemination and exchange of information. It is at this point where the research dwells to make an academic report on the Advantages & Disadvantages of Social Network Advertising in Communication. The research features a critical analysis on the use of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube applications. The writings are manifested in a literature review that incorporates advantages & disadvantages of advertisements within the selected social media applications. The author has documented his journey through the research & report writing process.

Keywords: Advantages, Disadvantages, Networking, Communication.



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1.0 Introduction

The following paragraphs would concentrate on three important social networks: “Twitter”; “Facebook” and “YouTube” in terms of their individual description, advantages and disadvantages performing social network advertising through them.

1.1 SOCIAL NETWORK

Social network is the use of **web-base** and **mobile technology** that allow the manifestation and transformation of a single piece of **communication** into an **interactive dialogue**, which then harnesses the essence of **social interaction** and **personal relationship**. In other words, it is a dedicated website or application which enables users to converse with one another by posting information, comments, messages and images. This is why, social network is alternatively referred to as “*virtual community*” or “*profile site*”. (www.lifewire.com)

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 TWITTER

Twitter is a **free social network microblogging service** that allows registered members to broadcast daily **short burst** messages to the world, called “*tweets*”. Tweets and replies to tweets can be sent by cell phone text message, desktop client and by posting at the ‘twitter.com’ website.

Thus, Twitter is a blend of instant messaging, blogging, and texting, but with brief content and a very broad audience that include; **people** who prefer to write or hold curiosity about celebrities, hobbies and topics; and **businesses** that use Twitter as an advertising platform for recruiting and consulting service for an advertising that is faster, less intrusive, and can be turned on or off at will. (Rouse, 2014)

2.1.1 Advantages advertising through Twitter

First, Twitter is user friendly where **communication** is performed globally and with people nearby the location of the user. The connectivity aspect of Twitter is where, for example, people “**follow**” each other, but they also actively engage with other people through **retweets** or even **direct conversation** (Badger, 2013). The @ **trademark** on Twitter develops an efficient style of sending quick questions or starting a personal conversation through direct message regarding a certain topic.

Indirectly this creates an interactive platform healthy for advertisers especially when replying to direct messages sent by customers regarding an inquiry. However, the secure fact is that, Twitter **does not** allow personal data to be exchanged, thus allowing communication of advertisements to be **general** and safe from **fraudulent activities**. (www.audiense.com)

Second, **eliminate abandoned sales opportunities**. Abandonment is an **electronic commerce** term that describes a visitor on a Web page who **adds** something to their shopping basket but **quits** before completing the purchase. Thus, it could have been a sales opportunity for a business but it was abandoned due to customers *unable to decide the purchase, unexpected website crash, complicated process or site timed out*.

This means, it is a **pending sale** for the business and **pending purchase** for the customer which needs to be eliminated but marketers struggle to close these uncompleted sales. Therefore, to close the incomplete sales, Twitter assists marketers to **search the e-mail addresses** of the customers, **import** those email addresses to match customer’s Twitter profiles, build **Tailored Audience lists**, and launch a **Twitter Advertisement campaign** targeting these people to visit the business’s website and finally close the sale.

Third, **real time gains**. Twitter is a **public platform** which means regardless of people being members or non-members, all have the ability to access Tweets. Thus, it is advantageous for businesses that are willing to get the message across the **targeted audience** at the **right time**. This can be done by utilizing the “**Promoted Tweets**” functionality that allows businesses to advertise in real-time world events making it easier especially if business already have **in-depth** segmentation and targeting so that getting the *right message* across the *right people* at the *right time* for a right product or service can be a success. Twitter gives businesses and advertisers the opportunity to combine diverse types of Twitter advertisements to develop powerful campaigns that help businesses achieve the desired results. (www.audiense.com)

2.1.2 Disadvantages advertising through Twitter

First, **time sensitive**. Twitter runs on a platform where great proportion of *messaging, texting and blogging* happens at specific time. Thus, it is vital for business to keep track of these peak times when most users are onboard so that the right advertisements can be revealed at the right time to the right people preventing promotions to be missed or simple ignored due to the overloaded clutter of tweets on Twitter. This is when, *social network managing and advertising skills* become a crucial element for a major time investment that is needed.

However, many businesses are reluctant towards this investment as over time, the *principle of consistency* becomes arduous to maintain, leaving businesses in a risky edge. For example, failure to monitor Twitter account, post valuable updates and respond to questions and feedbacks can cause customers to lose trust in your product and service leading to emergence of negative feedback that carry the chances of your product getting withdrawn from the market as nobody would have interest on that product anymore. (www.webpagefx.com)

Second, **‘philosophy of 140 characters’**. According to Salman Aslam, 2017 (www.omnicoreagency.com), there are *100 million daily active* twitter users sending *500 million tweets per day, 350000 tweets per minute* and *6000 tweets per second*. Amongst these million tweets of layman’s casual conversations are business advertisements. This philosophy is advantageous for ordinary users to prevent large chunks of lengthy tweets clogging up Twitter, however it **limits** the amount of information a business can reveal regarding its advertisement (Especially businesses that use informative advertising technique). This can go against the *Customer Right Act 2015* which preaches that customers carry all rights to access product information and so, it is mandatory for businesses to provide sufficient product information to customers.

As a result, two acts can occur. First, businesses **start posting more than 1 tweet** to ensure sufficient information is provided. This would increase the overall number of tweets causing twitter to crash and be less responsive. Second, business would **place more information (read-ups) by attaching ‘links** at the bottom of the tweet. This means that the precise and concise 140 characters must be persuasive enough to get customers ‘tap’ the link, or not, it would be ignored. (www.adweek.com)

Third, **‘Twitter is for all but not everyone’**. Twitter is **not an engine** that can be **adapted** easily especially for professionals such as lawyers, solicitors and dentists that offer **high-end professional services** as they may find it difficult to break into the **‘Twittersphere’**. The Twittersphere is an environment that is tailored for casual conversations in the form of tweets that run on high speed forcing businesses to consistently update their advertisements and marketing strategies (if they want to be prominent amongst the casual tweets).

Thus, discussion on complex topics and law cases may **not match** the fast-moving casual environment Twitter dwells in. However, even if professionals opt to advertise through Twitter, they would need to **hire Twitter (social network) experts** to assist them manage their Twitter account to capture interests of the targeted Twitter audience. In long run, this may be **costly, time consuming** and **risky** in a sense that, if, **wrong person is hired** or if the tweets are not up-to-date, there is high changes of losing **business reputation**. As such, Twitter can be for all, but not everyone. (www.visibilitymagazine.com)

2.2 FACEBOOK

According to Margaret Rouse, (www.whatis.techtarget.com), ‘**Facebook** is the most **popular** and **dominant** (according to its usage), **free** social networking website that allows registered users to *create profiles, upload pictures and videos, chat live, stream live videos and send messages between friends, colleagues, family members and converse with people especially far away from you*’.

It was created by **Mark Zuckerberg** and **Edward Saverin** as a **school based** social-network in **Harvard University** in February 2004, and in 2007, Facebook was officially a platform that allowed applications to be created. Today, Facebook is no longer a website but a **branded utility** that runs based on a **profit motive** and is vast like the *World Wide Web*. (Daniel Nations, 2016)

2.2.1 Advantages advertising through Facebook

First, **cost effective marketing strategy**. The minimum amount for advertising on Facebook is **\$1 per day** where on Facebook, it is not about *how much* advertising costs, but *how far* your money can go, as on

Facebook, advertising happens based on a ‘**bidding structure**’. The options available are, **Cost Per Click (CPC)**-bidding and paying a small amount based on number of clicks; **Cost Per Mille (CPM)**-bid per 1000 impressions; **Optimized Cost Per Mille (oCPM)** where Facebook shows your advertisement to people who are most like to take action on it and; **Cost Per Action (CPA)**-bidding based on users to take action on your advertisement. This way, it becomes more faster and easier to keep track and reach your target market. (Bagguley, 2016)

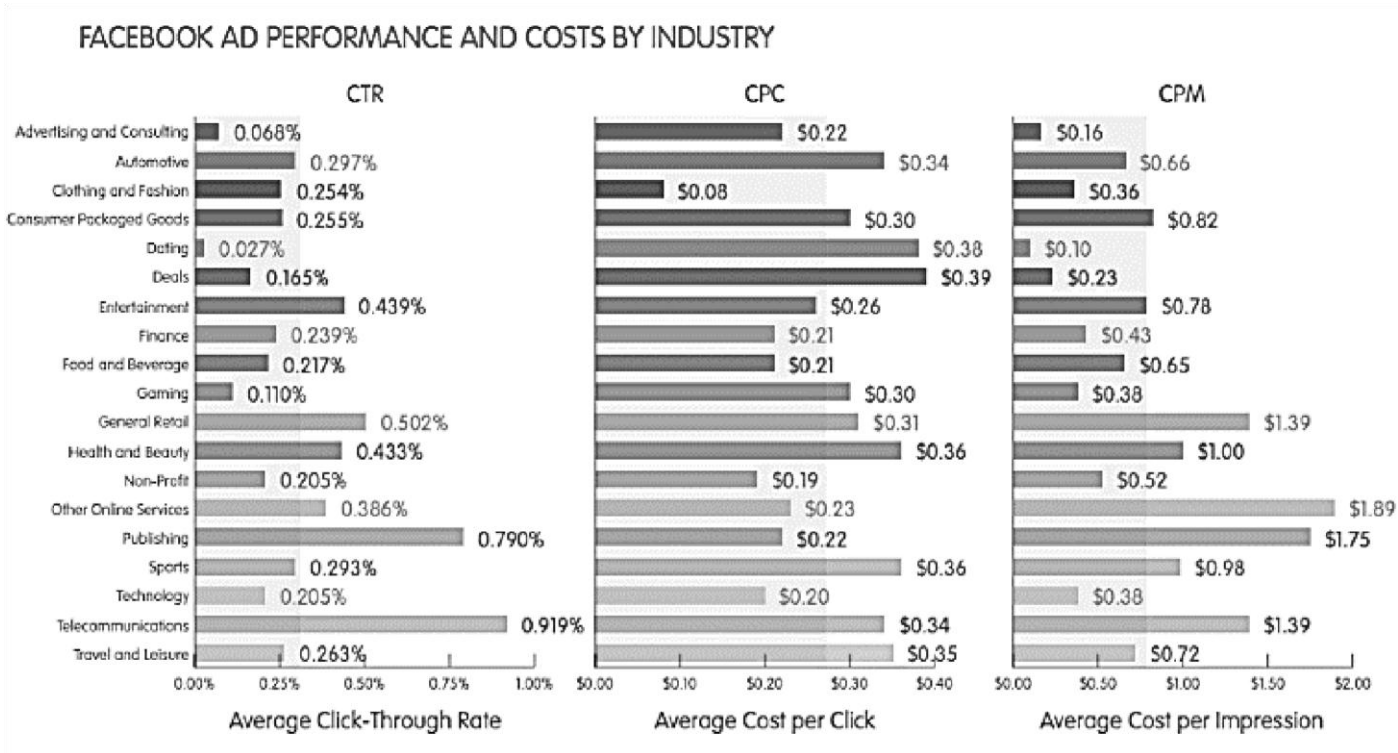
Second, **conversion measure**. Through **Facebook Pixel**, you are able to examine and keep track of the actions viewers perform after viewing your advertisement across any type of device. Also, combining Pixel with bidding option ‘**optimization**’, your advertisements will be automatically displayed to people who are interested in your product. Thus, through this, companies can record the reactions of viewers towards their advertisement and accordingly upgrade and update the advertisements towards customers preferences, so that number of interested customers increases allowing ‘optimization’ to send the advertisements to more people. (George, 2016)

Exhibit 1.0 Facebook Conversion Measure

Columns: Performance ▾ Breakdown ▾ Export ▾				
Results ▾	Reach ▾	Cost ▾	Amount Spent ▾	Ends ▾
22 Website Conversions	791	\$9.09 Per Website Co...	\$200	Aug 6, 2015
12 Website Conversions	3920	\$12.50 Per Website Co...	\$150	Aug 31, 2014

Source: www.linkedin.com

Exhibit 1.1 Facebook Advertising Cost

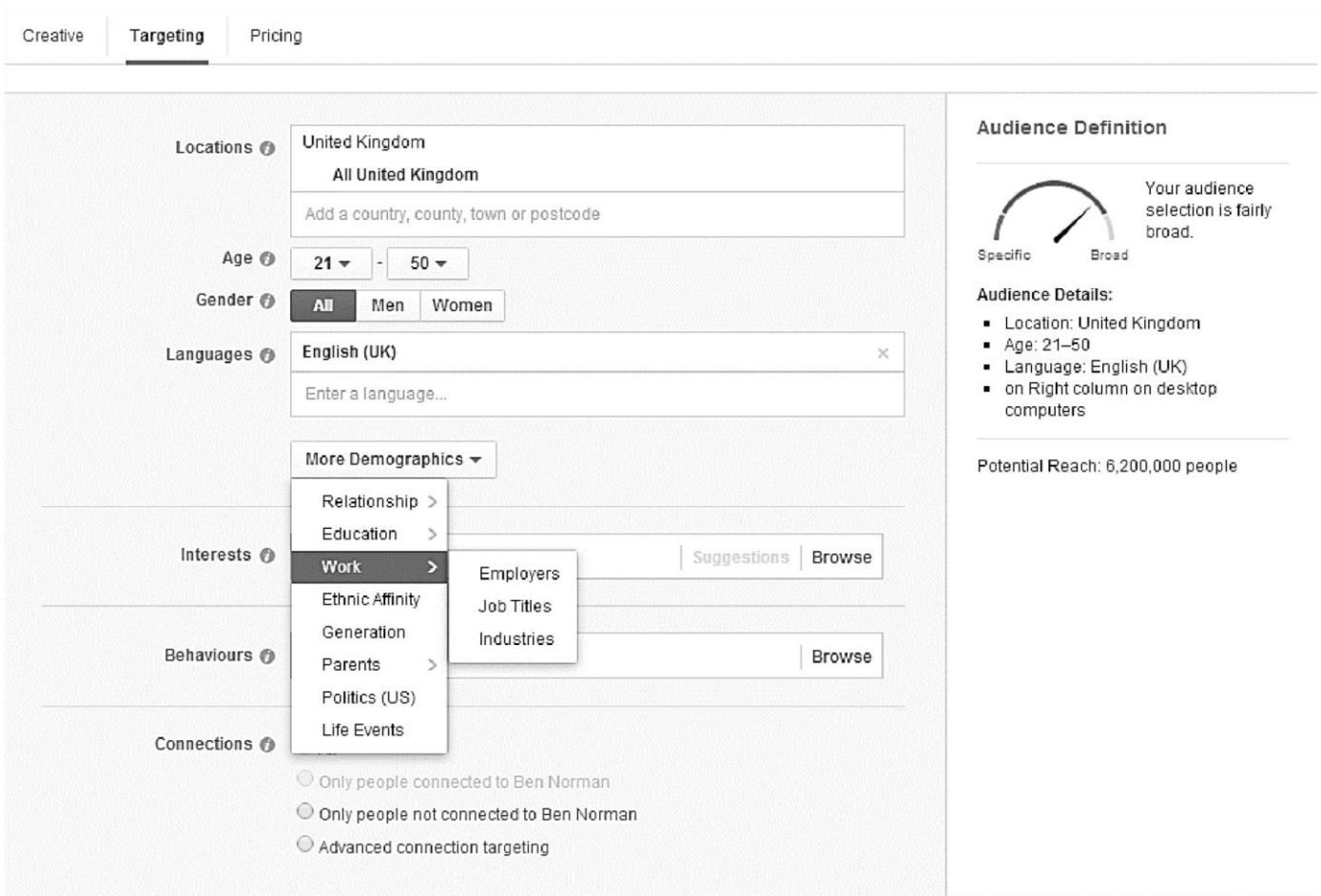


Source: www.linkedin.com

Third, **targeting options**. Facebook advertisements can be channeled towards specific **demographics** and user interest rather than targeting based on their **search**. There are 3 options of targeting: ‘**expressed interests**’-targeting people who are interested in small business, marketing, or population over 30 years whom can handle authoritative procedures; ‘**genders**’-targeting online females for fashion and shopping, online males for black heads removal masks with face cleansers and setting age limit for online dating websites; ‘**locals**’-target customers based on geographical regions based on country, city and postcode.

To ensure the targeting options are successful, Facebook provides “**A/B Testing Service**” through the “**Power Editor Software**” which is a *split testing process* that compares two variants of a web-page to see which one has better performance—according to your business’s *audience type, age segments* and *locations*. In return, this scenario connects to “**Facebook Insights**” which records and analyses all data of your business’s performance in terms of *page data, customers reactions, feedbacks, paid posts* and *future posts*. This gives a **statistical edge** to a business allowing them to brainstorm and innovate new strategies for **market survival** and Facebook advertising continuity which cannot be found in Twitter and YouTube’s advertising concept. (Hallam, 2016)

Exhibit 1.2 Facebook Targeting Option



Source: www.koozai.com

2.2.2 Disadvantages advertising through Facebook

First, **fake clicks and subscriptions**. According to www.zephoria.com (2017), there are ‘**1.28 billion daily active** Facebook users with **1.15 billion Mobile Daily Active Users** (Mobile DAU) and **1.94 billion monthly active** Facebook users. However, there is no indicator proving that all these profiles are of **legitimate** people. Thousands of profiles are fake. Thus, businesses advertising should not get carried away if they receive many ‘**Likes**’ as most of the likes are **fake likes** from people operating on fake profiles who simply ‘like’ your page in order to make their profile look more genuine.

Also, if people ‘like’ your page, it does not mean that they are **interested** and would loyally observe your posts. They can unlike and unsubscribe your page and your new posts will be **hidden from their newsfeed** and thus, they could only see your advertisements if they actively visit your Facebook page. This makes it difficult to accurately measure impressions as there is no indicator showing how many people are viewing your posts. (Webster, 2017)

Second, **purchase advertising**. Businesses pay based on Cost Per Click (CPC), Optimized Cost Per Mille (oCPM), Cost Per Mille (CPM) and Cost Per Action (CPA) so that their advertisements would get a popular place on Facebook. However, ‘**paying**’ here does not mean ‘**handling a stack of cash**’ to get advertisement, but it means, ‘**entering a bid**’. The more you bid, the more likely your adverts are shown. This means, **risk** comes together as regardless of the most amount of money you bid, there is **no guarantee** your adverts would earn you customers and sales. (www.nycwebdesign.com)

Third, **professionalism and voice of business**. Like Twitter, Facebook was created for casual conversations which may **not suit professional** businesses like hospital and law firm’s advertisements. Therefore, for all businesses, *Facebook management skills* forces businesses to **hire professionals** who can manage Facebook while monitoring and managing negative feedbacks of customers promptly with critical planning. This will be **expensive** in long run but if it is not done right now, it will get even costly in term of too much **time consumption** rectifying the accumulated posts as Facebook engagement grows 24/7. This will make company’s brand seem less professional leading to **decelerating brand reputation**. (Querrey, n.d.)

2.3 YOUTUBE

YouTube is an **American first** large-scale **free video** *watching, uploading, multimedia sharing and broadcasting* website created and activated on February 2005 by three former PayPal employees **Chad Hurley, Steve Chen** and **Jawed Karim**. However, since November 2006, YouTube is **owned by Google**, thus being one of Google's most popular peripheral subsidiaries with anyone allowed to upload distinct varieties of astonishing watchable content in more than 61 different languages over 75 countries worldwide. (Wendy Boswell, 2016) (www.lifewire.com)

As of 2016, YouTube launches social networking tool “**YouTube Community**” (where YouTube invites creators to form partnership for designing tools they prefer to enhance engagement with fans) that contains new social networking features which allow creators to share more content like, *photos; images; animated GIFs; live videos* and allow users to *set notification alert* to be updated with their favorite creator's post, *thumbs up-and-down (like) and leave a comment*. (Saqib Shah, 2016) (www.digitaltrends.com)

2.3.1 Advantages advertising through YouTube

First, **Youtube advertising helps you get found on Google**. The concept of ‘**Google Universal Search**’ allows news, books, local search and videos to simultaneously appear on ‘**Google Search Results**’. This shows, Google treats videos as important as **text-only-pages**. Thus, businesses can take advantage of this where in addition to having a detailed **write-up** on google which is merely static text, they can create **YouTube videos** that promote and advertise their existence in a **visual sense**.

As a result, there are two ways people can search your business: **through YouTube** and **through Google**-which shows results for video and text option. So, there is high chances of your company being ‘**searched**’ more number of times as videos appear more often on Google search with **60%** of searches likely clicking the **first 3** results on Google. (www.wearegrow.com)

Thus, more searching not only makes your company to be **frequently found** but increases your **website authority**. The more authoritative your website, the **higher the ranking** of your company on Google Search. This is possible because Google shares a connection with YouTube by owning it and therefore, advertising through YouTube means companies have chances to get famous on Google too. (www.wearegrow.com)

Second, **traffic volumes**. According to Katie Birkbeck, 2017 (www.bluecorona.com) and (www.expandeddramblings.com), “There are **1.3 billion YouTube users** (one-third of the people on the planet) with over **1 billion people visiting YouTube monthly, viewing 4 billion videos** (*323 days’ worth YouTube videos*) **daily** from **100 hours of videos uploaded every 60 seconds**, by spending an average **40 minutes per session on YouTube**, thus making YouTube the **2nd largest** search engine and **3rd most visited** website worldwide after Google and Facebook”.

The enormous volume of people itself gives businesses a large platform to promote their existence by producing the most creative, unique and suitable videos of high quality to their target market. Despite millions of business types are advertising through YouTube, the quantity of people present is so big that it is **guaranteed** a business could find a segmented group of **interested people** who are **craving** for their products and services. However, to achieve this, it is important for business to provide sufficient *information, entertainment* and *solutions* towards customer’s problems. Thus, businesses stand an opportunity of having many from the millions become their prospective customer. (Baum, 2015)

Third, **AdWords and AdSense**. Since Google owns YouTube, many Google features can be used to gain advertising benefits on YouTube. For example, if a business has targeted to provide goods for teenagers in America, by using **Google AdWords**, it would track and collect information regarding the most watched YouTube video by teenagers. Then, AdWords would allow the business’s advertisement to appear on these **‘most watched videos’** to bring awareness and attract the teenagers about the product existence.

This way, the company can measure as to whether the product idea **match** the target market desires and expectations and whether the dimension of **‘video design’** created, left an impact on its target market. The business using AdWords pays for customers who views the video for **30 seconds** and above as they are believed to be **‘engaged viewers’** who are likely to **subscribe the channel**. Thus, if the video is **skipped**, there is **no payment** for it.

Google AdSense is when businesses **directly earn money** from creating regular video content. This means running AdWords by **paying per advertisement click** but earning money by **allowing others to advertise** on your videos through AdSense. (www.wearegrow.com)

2.3.2 Disadvantages advertising through YouTube

First, **same tags are not content related**, the videos uploaded on YouTube would be mixed with several other videos that share the same tag as your video. Thus, businesses (or any uploaders) have **no control** as to what **related video would be displayed** while or after people finish watching your video, as YouTube decides the 'display' resulting to high chances of content not appealing to your prospect. Also, having others use the **same tag** as your video creates high competition when people access your video as there are chances where YouTube users may get attracted and become potential customers for your competitors' value proposition instead of yours. (Gaille, 2015)

Second, **no guarantee**. Regardless of the amount of money a business invests on YouTube advertising, there is no guarantee the video advertisement would *gain many likes, views, shares and subscribers*. It is solely the responsibility of the business as to **how it markets** the existence of the video, or not, either the advertisements would **sit empty** on views or have views and likes from people only out of entertainment without **genuine interest** from the customer to purchase the product.

Also, there is no guarantee that a competitor will **not advertise** on the business's video, acting as contrary towards Google AdSense. This is because YouTube features advertisements of your competitors around your videos under '**related videos**' or '**promoted videos**' section diminishing attention of your target market. (Gaille, 2015)

Third, **consumer behavior**. According to Danny Donchev, 2017, 'there are more than **40%** of people and businesses advertising on YouTube and each of the **top 100 advertisers** of YouTube spend more than **60%** yearly on an average for their advertisement videos' (www.fortunelords.com).

Regardless of how interesting the advertising video is, 2 situations happen: viewers click the '**skipad**' option or viewers tend to **do other things** while advertisement play on the background when there is no 'skip-ad' option. In both these instances, it shows viewers are frustrated and **simple ignore** the advertisement as either it is not appealing enough, they are not part of the target market or they are interested but not persuaded enough. Thus, it is vital for companies to plan the nitty gritty of advertising elements so that the video survives through the advantages while eliminating the disadvantages. (Fairley, 2015)

3.0 Conclusion

In this 21st century, social network advertising is one of the **easiest, fastest** and **cost-effective** opportunities for companies, business or any movement to **remind, persuade** and **create awareness** regarding their product or service existence towards their target market.

This is because social network shares an environment that appeals to everyone regardless of their *demographics, geographical location, age* and *gender attributes*, thus making it a platform consisting the **largest number of people** being connected through it **worldwide**.

However, this is a platform where just **one action** can cause a huge **positive or negative impact** on the viewers as well as on the person performing the action. This is because millions of people are advertising through it and viewing it. Due to this, all social networks may be disadvantageous in terms of **getting negative feedbacks, failure to keep up with customers inquiries, tendency of spamming, highly competitive environment where your advertisements can be easily ignored, frustrated customers, expensive to maintain in long run** and **increasing time consumption**.

Looking on the brighter side, every good will have its bad side, thus it is solely the responsibility of the company as to how well it has the ability to **capture and benefit** from all the advantages of social network advertising while **preventing** every action of it to be affected by social network's disadvantages. This *social network advertising managing ability* would help create an **ideal balance** shaping company's **long-term survival** and success in the world of social network advertising.

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